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Dear Families,

We hope you are all keeping healthy and safe in these current times. We know this has been a challenging time: isolation, working from home, furlough, redundancy, illness, and with home schooling as well. But during this time I also know many of you have pulled together, offered extra help for communities, discovered teaching skills you never knew you had, and also stayed in contact with us. You've helped your children complete some brilliant work.

We have worked hard as a school team, including our governing body, over the past week and a half to put together a plan to enable us to reopen the school provisionally from 8th June. I am glad to say that we now have one, and I am in a position to communicate that to you. I want to thank the staff team for the commitment and support they have shown, not just to helping us be able to open more widely, but to myself and the school over the past 9 weeks.

You will have seen in the media, and have formed your own opinions, about the proposal to reopen schools to children in Years R, 1 and 6. Some reports have been highly critical of the teaching unions, accusing them of wanting to prevent children accessing their education, whilst others have raised serious concerns about the safety of opening schools up further at this time, or the availability of appropriate track and trace capability. As a parent of three school aged children myself, with many family members and friends who are also parents, I fully understand the range of opinions and concerns parents have.

I can absolutely guarantee you that there is nothing any teacher wants more than for children to return to school and restart their education. If it were safe we would have all 350 of our pupils back tomorrow. But, I know from our indicative survey to parents of families in R, 1 and 6 that between 25% and 50% of you will not be planning on sending your children back to school in any case. What you must also understand is that teachers are trained and reminded constantly that our number one priority is always the safety of the children – be that through Safeguarding, Risk Assessments, and so on. I must factor into that the safety of my staff as well.

I would like to extend my thanks to the vast majority of families who responded to that indicative survey for those year groups. What was also clear from those responses was that many of you wanted to know more details of our plans before deciding.

So, in this letter I will set out our plan for how this will work and we are also providing a reference document looking at the reasoning and thinking behind our decision, and the differing arguments to help you inform your decision.

Our plan

The most important thing to make clear is that school will not look or be the same on 8th June. For any parent who has been under the impression that children will come back to school, see all of their friends, slip straight back in to school as it was before the closure, I'm afraid that will not be the case. You will need to reflect on that as you decide whether or not to return your child to school.

Organisation of the children

- As stated in the government guidance, each group of children will be split into standalone 'pods' or 'bubbles' based on a classroom. These will be taught by, preferably, one adult who, preferably, won't teach any other pods. The children will have no direct, close interaction with other pods. They will have allocated and staggered break and lunch times, play in allocated areas on the field/playground, at all times not mixing with other pods. Play equipment will be out of bounds. No contact games, catch games, etc. This is all in line with the government guidance
- Each pod will be based in a classroom, with numbers in each pod based on socially distanced seating. This means that each class will have a capacity of 8 - 10 children, on their own desk, with their own resources, as close to 2m away from everyone else as we can manage. We need to minimise the use of shared resources or not use them at all, which is preferable. Movement around the class will need to be carefully managed.
- EYFS will be slightly different, we will limit numbers as far as possible and make maximum use of the space. We can't expect these children to sit at desks or socially distance. We can only encourage and separate them as much as possible while socially distancing ourselves, cleaning more, and making use of the larger classrooms and outside areas.
- Whether or not we will need a rota, despite government preference, or will have to limit to just EYFS and Year 1 (on top of key worker provision, and in line with government guidance) will heavily depend on numbers. Based on the indicative survey we think we will be able to accommodate everyone who wants to come. However, we withhold the option to split the children into Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday attendance only, with Wednesday withheld for cleaning should numbers dictate this; or as government guidance says, to give preference to Key Worker children, then EYFS and Year 1 children, over Year 6. This may also involve the same staff teaching different pods, which may not be as safe. We have different models to implement based on attendance.
- Key worker provision will still be open for 5 days per week, BUT, these children will also be rearranged into similar aged 'pods' and follow the same clear rules and expectations as the others. Up until now we have had a small amount of staff, children and families attending the school. With these proposals we are looking at potentially 200-220 children and staff using the school over the course of a week so we need to get more rigid to ensure everyone's safety.
- Whilst we will always strongly encourage all children to be in school all of the time, normal attendance 'rules' do not apply in that there are no fines and schools are not accountable for attendance in this time.
- Once we have attendees confirmed, we will be able to let children know which pod they will be in, and with which member of staff, and whether attendance will be full time or part time.

Curriculum

- As these pods will be year group based, we will be able to deliver more of a 'typical' curriculum provision. But, guidance also suggests making use of outdoor spaces as much as possible, cutting down on the breadth of PE sports, and other activities which may involve more shared resources will be trickier to organise, so it may not be as 'broad and balanced' curriculum as normal.

- For those children in Years 2-5, and other children in R, 1 and 6 who are not in school, online and remote learning will still be in place. This could see some slight tweaks in how they are set as more teachers will be in school, but we also aim for teachers who can't be in school for health reasons to support this from home.

Staffing

- We will be required to allocate staff to different pods. Where possible, this will be a class teacher, and where possible, this will be your child's class teacher. **But, we cannot guarantee that.** Indeed, Miss Howard, Mrs Jennings and Mr Marchand are all unavailable to teach for health reasons, whilst Mr Brown will likely be required to take on roles outside of the class. If your child is in Kingfishers, Owls, Blackbirds or is a key worker child in Song Thrushes, they will **not** be taught by their class teacher. Staffing organisation is yet to be confirmed as it depends on numbers and organisation.

Arrival and Departure; movement and visitors

- There will be strict and staggered starts and ends to the day. We will use a 'single point of entry' system based on the main school entrance. Children will queue, 2m spaced, to enter the school. We will ask that all children wash their hands thoroughly before coming to school and then they will have their hand sanitized by a member of staff upon entry before walking to their pod.
- This means that the normal 0840-1515 day will change for most. Indeed, a lack of breaks away from the children could mean **there is a requirement for a slightly shorter day on one or more days** to enable to staff to continue with the remote learning provision and family contact for those children not in school.
- We will implement a one-way system for the start of the day at the front of the school for parents dropping off.
- We will require parents to say goodbye to their children where the main path up to school entrance begins. This will be to prevent two-way 'traffic' on that narrow path.
- In school, we will implement a one-way system around the school.
- At home time, we would ask parents to wait, socially distanced, at the front of the school, making use of the grass verges and pathways alike. The pods will be dismissed one at a time, with children queuing down the path and being released individually.
- However, siblings will be able to arrive and go home together. Neither will siblings be required to distance in school, can sit at the same desk if they are eg twins, and will be in the same pod.
- Parents and non-essential visitors will NOT be allowed into the building. We would request all communication be via telephone, email or Class Dojo. The office will implement a system for dropping off letters and packages.
- We will try and keep 'Squirrels' open but will have to keep this under constant review in terms of manageability. Initially we are limiting this provision to Key Worker children, but given that this will involve mixing of different children in different pods, we **MUST** strictly socially distance them and ask parents to only use the provision if absolutely essential.

Lunch and Break

- The playground and field will be divided up so that pods continue to be isolated from one another at playtime, in line with government guidance.
- There will be no use of the play equipment or shared resources. Mr Winkworth is preparing some suggestions for suitable playtime games.

- As with PE, playground games will be strictly no-touch and not involve shared balls, etc. Footballs will be allowed if they are used in a non-contact way, and also only used sensibly within their areas.
- EYFS will be based in their area all day and will not be part of the timetable for the playground.
- Edwards and Blake, our caterers, we understand have taken the decision **not** to offer hot meals and will only provide picnic lunches. Lunches will therefore be eaten by children in classrooms at their desks.

Personal safety

- PPE will be provided for staff who have to have close contact with children, through for example First Aid or intimate care in EYFS. Delaying the expansion of provision for a week enables us to be sure our supplies of PPE are sufficiently in stock.
- PPE is not required, according to government guidance, for teachers. However, wider public guidance suggests the use of face coverings in enclosed spaces where social distancing cannot be guaranteed, and in countries that have started returning to school (such as France) this HAS been made a requirement. As such, I will not discourage any member of staff or child in Y5 or 6 who would wish to wear a face covering. Younger children are not able to use face coverings appropriately and should not wear them to school.
- Children should bring their own tissues in to school. We will not have shared tissues.
- Anything children bring in to school – be that coats, book bags, etc – will be based at their desk. We ask parents to limit the amount of ‘stuff’ children bring in each day. We are looking at the provision of reading books to potentially online only through the Oxford Owl scheme and will confirm this in due course.
- We would remind parents to apply suncream each day. We will not be able to in any class and we are likely, in line with guidance, to spend more time outside.
- We will be encouraging staff to use the staff room as little as possible and implement social distancing therein.
- Some of our support staff will be designated as a ‘clean team’ who will be asked to clean used surfaces twice per day on top of a more thorough daily clean each evening.
- We will revert to our intensive handwashing regime that was in place prior to closure, although this could now be supplemented by hand sanitizer which is more available than it was.
- We will increase our safety signage around the school.

Symptomatic Children or staff

- **If anyone in your family becomes symptomatic – including the latest ‘lack of smell and taste’ symptom, they should isolate at home for 14 days in line with wider government guidance.**
- If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough or high temperature they will be sent home immediately and advised to self-isolate accordingly with their family.
- If a child is awaiting collection, they will be moved to the entrance foyer by the sports hall.
- If they need the toilet they will use the sports hall staff changing room toilets which should be cleaned and disinfected ASAP afterwards and before anyone else uses it.
- PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).
- All other parents in that pod will be informed immediately that an anonymous child has shown symptoms and be given the option to collect their child

- That child's seat and area will be thoroughly disinfected. Any books, etc will be left on the desk and not touched, or if moved, with strict handwashing afterwards.
- All symptomatic staff and children will be eligible for testing.
- Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms. Where the test is negative, parents in the pod will likewise be informed that this has come back negative (maintaining child anonymity)

Next steps

Now that you have a clearer picture of what school will be like – and I think this seems to be a similar to picture to what other schools are doing – we need to find out from you if you will be sending your child(ren) to school from 8th June (if schools expand their provision nationally).

This will then enable us to group children, make final arrangements with regard to full-time attendance, timetable starts and ends of days, breaktimes, etc.

Once confirmed, we will write to all families of children coming back to school with details of the new arrangements for their child as soon as practically at the start of June.

Please note: if you say you will NOT be sending your child back, we are asking that you do not change your mind before 19th June at the earliest. This gives us a chance to finalise our approaches before we start having conversations about how we might be able to take more children, or indeed prepare for potential wider reopening at the end of June.

Therefore, by Friday, 29th May, please email the school office or phone and speak to someone, letting us know:

Child(ren)'s name(s), classes, and whether or not they will be attending full time potentially from 8th June.

These are difficult, challenging times for everyone and I wanted to thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Seeman

Headteacher

